DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 440 TM 030 627

TITLE	NELS:88/2000. Fourth Follow-up: An Overview.
INSTITUTION	National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	NCES-2000-301
PUB DATE	1999-12-00
NOTE	15p.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. Dept. of Education, ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; College Graduates; *Educational Attainment; Educational Trends; Followup Studies; Longitudinal Studies; National Surveys; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; Trend Analysis; *Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS	*National Education Longitudinal Study 1988

ABSTRACT

Early in 2000, data collection will begin for the fourth follow-up of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/2000). NELS:88 is a major longitudinal study that provides trend data about critical transitions experienced by young people as they develop, attend school, embark on their careers, and form families. NELS:88/2000 will furnish information on how school policies, family involvement, teacher practices, intensity of course taking experiences, and post-secondary education affect student outcomes, including academic achievement, persistence in high school, participation in post-secondary education, and occupational experiences. NELS:88 is the first study sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics that began surveying students as early as eighth grade. The same students were resurveyed in 1990, 1992, and 1994. The fourth follow-up will revisit the sample when many have completed college and are 8 years out of high school. The data set has been designed to support cross-sectional, longitudinal, and trend analyses. The electronic codebook and the Data Analysis System are described. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 437 440

NATIONAL ION STATIST

NE /2000

Fourth Follow-up: An Overview

TM030627

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement NCES 2000–301

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley, *Secretary*

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
C. Kent McGuire, *Assistant Secretary*

National Center for Education Statistics
Gary W. Phillips, *Acting Commissioner*

December 1999

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to education in the United States and other nations. It fulfills a congressional mandate to collect, analyze, and report full and complete statistics on the condition of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports and specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; assist state and local education agencies in improving their statistical systems; and review and report on education activities in foreign countries.

NCES activities are designed to address high priority education data needs; provide consistent, reliable, complete, and accurate indicators of education status and trends; and report timely, useful, and high quality data to the U.S. Department of Education, the Congress, the states, other education policymakers, practitioners, data users, and the general public.

We strive to make our products available in a variety of formats and in language that is appropriate to a variety of audiences. You, as our customer, are the best judge of our success in communicating information effectively. If you have any comments or suggestions about this or any other NCES product or report, we would like to hear from you. Please direct your comments to:

National Center for Education Statistics
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208–5574

The NCES World Wide Web Home Page is: **http://nces.ed.gov**
The NCES World Wide Web Electronic Catalog is: **http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/index.asp**

What is NELS:88/2000?

Early in 2000, data collection will begin for the fourth follow-up of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/2000). NELS:88 is a major longitudinal study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. It provides trend data about critical transitions experienced by young people as they develop, attend school, embark on their careers, and form families. Given the challenge facing America's schools – to educate all of our young people for the next decade, regardless of family circumstances, NELS:88/2000 will furnish information on how school policies, family involvement, teacher practices, intensity of course taking experiences, and postsecondary education experiences affect student outcomes (i.e., academic achievement, persistence in high school, participation in postsecondary education, and occupational experiences).

NELS:88 is the first NCES sponsored national longitudinal education study to begin surveying students as early as eighth grade. In 1988, some 25,000 eighth-graders and their parents, teachers, and school principals were surveyed. These same students were resurveyed in 1990, 1992, and 1994 as part of the first, second, and third follow-ups of NELS:88. The fourth follow-up will revisit the same sample of students in the year 2000, when many of these individuals will have completed college and are 8 years out of high school. The NELS:88 fourth follow-up is being conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, a contract research organization located in North Carolina. Earlier data collection activities were carried out by the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago.

What data was collected and from whom?

NELS:88 is a longitudinal study of a national probability sample of eighth-graders. The base year student population excluded students with severe mental disabilities, students whose command of the English language was insufficient to understand survey materials, and students with physical or emotional problems that would limit their participation. Thus, NELS:88 began with a sample of eighth-grade students in 1988 who attended regular public and private schools across the United States. Hispanic and Asian students were oversampled, as were private school students. Additional context information was collected from school administrators, parents, and teachers.

Base year (1988)

The base year of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 represented the first stage of a major longitudinal effort designed to provide trend data about critical transitions experienced by students as they leave elementary school and progress through high school and into postsecondary institutions or the workforce. Many of the variables collected in the base year serve as predictor variables (e.g., family characteristics, school experiences, aspirations, and school achievement and course work) for later outcome measures (e.g., graduating from high school, attending postsecondary school, graduating from college).

First follow-up (1990)

The first follow-up in 1990 constituted the first opportunity for longitudinal measurements from the 1988 baseline. It also provided a comparison point to high school sophomores 10 years before, as studied in High School and Beyond (HS&B), another longitudinal study of American young people. The first follow-up study captured the population of early dropouts (those who left school prior to the end of 10th grade), while monitoring the transition of the student population into secondary schooling.

Second follow-up (1992)

The second follow-up took place early in 1992, when most sample members were in the second semester of their senior year of high school. The second follow-up provided a culminating measurement of learning in the course of secondary school, and also collected information that facilitates investigation of the transition into the labor force and postsecondary education after high school. Because the NELS:88 sample was freshened to represent the high school class of 1992, trend comparisons can be made to the high school classes of 1972 and 1980 that were studied in NLS-72 (National Longitudinal Survey of 1972) and HS&B. The NELS:88 second follow-up also surveyed students who were identified as dropouts in 1990, and identified and surveyed additional students who had left school since the prior wave.

Third follow-up (1994)

The third follow-up took place in 1994, when most sample members had completed high school. The primary goals of the 1994 round were: 1) to provide data for trend comparisons with NLS-72 and HS&B; 2) to address issues of employment and postsecondary access and choice; and 3) to ascertain how many dropouts have returned to school and by what route.

Fourth follow-up (2000)

The fourth follow-up is scheduled for 2000, when most sample members who attended college and technical schools will have completed their postsecondary education. The survey will be conducted primarily by computer-assisted telephone interviewing. The primary goals of the 2000 round will be: 1) to provide trend comparisons with NLS-72 and HS&B; 2) to address issues of employment and postsecondary persistence and attainment; and 3) to ascertain how many high school dropouts have returned to school and by what route.

What are some of the research issues that can be addressed by NELS:88/2000?

The longitudinal design of NELS:88 permits the examination of change in young people's lives and the role of education in promoting growth and positive life outcomes. In particular, NELS:88 can be used to investigate the following:

1. Students' academic growth over time;
2. Transition from eighth grade to high school;
3. The process of dropping out of school, as it occurs from eighth grade on;
4. The role of the school in helping the disadvantaged;
5. School experiences and academic performance of minority students;
6. Students' pursuit of the study of mathematics and science;
7. Features of effective schools;
8. Access and choice to postsecondary schools;
9. Transitions to postsecondary education and the world of work;
10. Family formation, including marital status and children; and
11. Trend analyses with previous longitudinal studies (e.g., NLS-72 & HS&B).

What types of data have been collected in NELS:88?

Since its inception in 1988, the following data have been collected by NELS:88:

- Student data (1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994)
- Student assessment data (1988, 1990, and 1992)
- Dropout data (1990, 1992, and 1994)
- Parent data (1988 and 1992)
- Teacher data (1988, 1990, and 1992)
- School data (1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994)
- High school transcript data (1992)

This database is made even more valuable with the addition of fourth follow-up data in 2000. The fourth follow-up data will add information on postsecondary outcomes, family formation, and occupational outcomes.

What kinds of analyses (reports) can be generated using NELS:88 data?

The NELS:88 data set was designed to support three types of analyses, including:

1. Cross-sectional – examining students at a single point in time;
2. Longitudinal – following students over time; and
3. Trend – using data from previous longitudinal studies to establish trends over time.

Examples of NCES reports that fit these three categories follow:

Cross-sectional

- *A Profile of the American Eighth Grader: NELS:88 Student Descriptive Summary* (NCES 90458, June 27, 1990)
- *A Profile of the American High School Sophomore in 1990* (NCES 95086, March 9, 1995)
- *A Profile of the American High School Senior in 1992* (NCES 95384, July 3, 1995)

Longitudinal

- *Who Goes to America's Highly Ranked "National" Universities?* (NCES 98095, November 1, 1998)
- *Two Years Later: Cognitive Gains and School Transitions of NELS:88 Eighth-Graders* (NCES 95436, September 28, 1995)

- *NELS:88/94 Descriptive Summary Report With an Essay on Access and Choice in Postsecondary Education* (NCES 96175, May 10, 1996)
- *Statistics in Brief: "At-Risk" Eighth-Graders Four Years Later* (NCES 95736, July 3, 1995)
- *Generational Status and Educational Outcomes Among Asian and Hispanic 1988 Eighth-Graders* (NCES 1999020, December 15, 1998)

Trends

- *Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972–1992* (NCES 95380, July 3, 1995)

How will the NELS:88/2000 data be disseminated?

NELS:88/2000 information will be disseminated in two formats: 1) electronic codebooks (ECBs) on CD-ROMs and 2) as part of the Data Analysis System (DAS).

11

What is the NELS:88/2000 ECB?

While the ECB system is primarily an electronic version of a fully documented survey codebook, it is also more. With the ECB, the data user of NELS:88 data can examine NELS:88 on his/her personal computer. The list below summarizes the major options that the ECB software provides to researchers using the NELS:88/2000 data.

- Users can electronically browse through a list of all the variables and composites contained on the NELS:88 data files.
- Using key words or variable names/labels, users can electronically search for variables that are relevant to their research questions.
- The ECB provides an electronic display of the full question text of each variable in the database, along with notes and other pertinent information.
- The ECB displays the SAS code that was used to create composite variables (if all of the variables that were used to construct the composite are also present on the data file).
- The ECB includes electronic display of the distribution of counts and percentages for each variable in the database.
- The ECB permits users to select or "tag" variables of interest.

  Users can subsequently:

  - print a hardcopy codebook that displays the distributions of the tagged variables;
  - generate SAS-PC, or SPSS-for-Windows program code for the tagged variables (that in turn can be used with a user's own SAS or SPSS statistical software); and
  - generate a "tag" file that will save the set of tags for import into another application.

The NELS:88 ECBs run on IBM-compatible PCs equipped with compact disc (CD-ROM) readers. Note that the ECB does not directly access the NELS:88 data on the CD. Instead, the ECB system generates program code that can later be used by the researcher with his/her own copies of SAS or SPSS. Optimal use of the ECB's SAS-PC or SPSS for Windows program code option requires access to the PC versions of these statistical software packages. However, users may modify the ECB-generated code for use with versions of SAS or SPSS running on other platforms, such as a mainframe or Unix systems. Statistical software is not provided with the NELS:88 ECBs.

What is the NELS:88/2000 DAS?

The Data Analysis System (DAS) is a Windows software application that provides public access to NCES survey data (including NELS:88/2000). With the DAS, users can generate tables of percentages, means, or correlation coefficients simply by choosing the DAS variables (based on survey questionnaire items) that they would like to appear in a table. Users specify the information they would like to appear in a table by creating a table parameter file (TPF). The DAS software will process the TPF and generate the table in the form of a PRN file. The PRN file provides the table numbers (usually percentages of students) and the corresponding standard errors that have been calculated taking into account the complex sampling procedures used in the NELS:88 survey. It should be pointed out though that the NELS:88/2000 DAS will not contain all NELS:88/2000 variables. It will contain a subset of the variables (those that were used by NCES in producing NELS:88/2000 reports).

How can I get more information on NELS:88/2000?

Interested researchers should visit the NCES Web site (http://nces.ed.gov) for more information on NELS:88 reports, instruments, procedures, and data files. The short document "Responses to Frequently Asked Questions Regarding NELS:88" will answer many of the commonly asked questions about the study. Additional questions can be addressed to the NELS:88 project officer at NCES or the study's project director at RTI:

Jeffrey A. Owings
National Center for Education Statistics
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208
Phone: (202) 219–1777
Email: Jeffrey_Owings@ed.gov

Daniel J. Pratt
Research Triangle Institute
PO Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
Phone: (919) 541–6615
Email: djp@rti.org

United States
Department of Education
Washington, DC 20208–5651

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of Education
Permit No. G–17

Standard Mail (A)